

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' NEEDS

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted primarily to find out the psycho-social needs of the students, and secondarily to validate the relevance of the current programs of the university Guidance Services. Four need-components postulated by Villar, Imelda VJ (2007): Self-Development (SD), Family Relationship (FR), Social Responsibility (SR) and Studies (S) were measured using a five-point scale.

A descriptive survey design in quantitative-qualitative approach was used. There were 1,923 student enrolled during the first semester of school year, 1,267 or 65.9% participated in the four-month duration of the study.

Six (6) academic departments considered "Plan my Life" as first priority and Very Important (VI) of the Self-development need-component. While two departments, Short Term Course and Colleges of Arts, Sciences and Education rated it as secondary to Self-knowledge.

Three (3) colleges of the eight (8) academic departments: Architecture and Engineering, Business Management and Accountancy and International Hospitality Management rated "Relationship with siblings" as Very Important (VI) in the Family Relationship need-component. Three other academic departments, Computer Studies, Short Courses, Allied Health and Arts, Sciences and Education, however are more concern of their ability to discuss problems and considered relationship with siblings as secondary. College of Criminology and Short Courses are very concern on the marital problems of their parents.

All academic departments with an over-all Weighted Mean of 4.25 (AWM: 4.25) gave prime importance and rated ways and means on how to "understand the lessons" as Extremely Important (EI) endeavour that requires a priority concern from the Guidance Services of the university.

KEYWORDS: Needs Assessment, Need-Component, Guidance and Counselling

INTRODUCTION

Guidance services of educational institutions play a significant role in the academic success of every student. The sensitiveness of the services offered requires an approved standard Guidance Counsellor Program that may include core curriculum experiences and demonstrated knowledge and skills (Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board, 2005). Psychological needs are basically the same among ASEAN societies, what may make them differ is rooted on the environmental complexities and societal dynamicity on how each individual struggle to satisfy them. Guidance services offered by educational institutions are focused on the fast-phased changing world of the younger generations. There is a tendency that guidance and counselling programs purportedly to enrich learning experience are designed for program needs instead for student needs (de la Cruz, 2014)

In the field of professional counselling needs assessment refers to the evaluative process of gathering and interpreting data about the need for programs and services (Gupta, *et al.*, 2007) have been used in various practice settings including schools (Cohen and Angeles, 2006) and in universities, (Harrar *et al.*, 2010). This is for the purpose of zeroing-in, prioritize and refine existing programs to meet the specific need of various subpopulations (Astramovich *et al.*, 2008). Needs assessment offer various benefits to counsellors in identifying potential gaps in services and increase their capability to refine services to suit the needs of the genre they counsel.

Guidance and counselling services in the Philippines have been professionalized. There are prescribed guidelines and criteria on the Continuing Professional Education (CPE) and adopted measures necessary and proper for the maintenance of high ethical standards in the practice of the profession (RA 9258, Art. II, sec. Q & ff.). This is premised on the desire of the state not only to educate her citizenry but for the purpose of improving the efficiency of higher educational institutions (Cele & Menon, 2006). It is further postulated that educational efficiency would mean producing employable graduates in a highly competitive labour market in the ASEAN region.

The University of Perpetual Help System is akin and committed to the education of the youth to its highest quality. It considers Guidance and Counselling Services a priority in all its educational processes and espoused an arguably premise that academic success does not end at graduation but must include high rate of employability. It is convinced that needs assessment is a continuing process and its results should be translated into specific and doable programs with built-in capability to monitor outcomes of rendered services to asses if student needs are rationally and appropriately met.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey design in quantitative-qualitative approach. There were 1,923 targeted respondents during the first semester of school year 2014-2015. Although only 1,267 or 65.9% participated in the study. All of the eight (8) academic departments of university were represented in the study.

The gathering of data was spearheaded by the office of the College Guidance and Counselling Services through questionnaires and random interview by the researcher of at least ten percent (10%) of the respondents which took almost five months.

Four need-components were measured in a five-point scale: Self-Development (SD), Family Relationship (FR), Social Responsibility (SR) and Studies (S). Each component has six (6) parameters inspired from the writings of Dr. Imelda V.G. Villar of the Philippine Psychological Association. Weighted Mean (WM) and Percentage descriptive statistical tools were used. A verbal interpretation of Extremely (EI), Very Important (VI), Moderately Important (MI) and Not Important (NI) were used to fully describe the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Short Courses with only thirty-five students enrolled in five courses when the survey was made posted the highest in percentage participation. However, it is to be noted that although the College of Engineering is only ranked third in participation it has the most number of students involved in the study, thirty-seven percent (37%) higher than the ranked second College of International Hospitality Management. College of Allied Courses although ranked last of the eight academic departments in percentage participation is actually nine percent (9%), sixteen percent (16%), fifty-one percent (51%), twenty-three percent (23%) higher than Colleges of Business Management and Accountancy, Arts and Science and

Education, Computer Studies and the Criminology, who were ranked seventh, sixth, fifth and fourth respectively as to the actual number participants in the survey. It is the actual number of participants from specific strata that has substantially influenced on bringing into surface the students' needs that has to be addressed through the programs of the guidance services. Table 1 described the distribution of respondents.

Table 1: Student Distribution per College

Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. Respondents	Percentage (%) of Students	Rank
			Participation	
College of Engineering	598	420	70.2	3
College of Computer Studies	143	100	69.9	5
Allied Health	383	201	52.5	8
Arts Sciences & Education	212	148	69.8	6
College of Criminology	221	155	70.1	4
College of BM & Accountancy	283	183	64.7	7
College of Int'l. Hospitality Mgt.	377	265	70.8	2
Short Courses	35	26	74.3	1
Total	1923	1267	65.9	

Six (6) of the academic departments considered "Plan my Life" as first priority and Very Important (VI) endeavour of the Self-development need-component. While two departments, Short Term Course and Colleges of Arts, Sciences and Education rated it as secondary to Self-knowledge or understanding oneself. Students are unanimous in showing their primary aspirations and concerns that they be assisted in planning their lives with Over-all Weighted Mean of 4.28 and secondly on programs that would help them in developing sense of self-confidence with of Over-all Weighted Mean 4.15.

Table 2: Over-All Student Needs Assessment: Self-Development

COLLEGES		Know and Understand Myself	Plan my life	Develop Self-Confidence	Develop my Talents	Improve my Appearance	Make Adjustment Where I am	Over-all Weighted Mean
Engineering	WM	4.10	4.44	4.28	4.02	3.77	3.88	4.08
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
Computer Studies	WM	3.88	4.33	4.03	3.82	3.55	3.83	3.81
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
Allied Health	WM	3.36	3.78	3.59	3.39	3.22	3.14	3.41
	Interpretation	MI	VI	VI	MI	MI	MI	MI
Arts Sciences & Education	WM	4.39	4.38	4.27	4.07	3.72	3.91	4.03
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
Criminology	WM	3.98	4.45	4.23	3.91	3.73	3.85	4.03
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
BM & Accountancy	WM	4.37	4.46	4.42	4.28	4.01	4.08	4.17
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
Int'l Hosp. Mgt.	WM	3.91	4.00	3.99	3.72	3.65	3.69	3.73
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	MI	VI	VI
Short Courses	WM	4.42	4.37	4.35	3.97	4.05	4.25	4.24
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
Weighted Average	WM	4.05	4.28	4.15	3.90	3.71	3.83	3.95
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI

Students of three (3) colleges: Architecture and Engineering, Business Management and Accountancy, International Hospitality Management rated “Improve Relationship with siblings” as Very Important (VI) and as the top priority in the Family Relationship need-component. Other academic departments, Computer Studies, Allied Health and Arts, Sciences and Education however are more concern of their ability to discuss problems and considered relationship with siblings as secondary. Students from the College of Criminology and Short Courses appeared to be more concern on findings ways to help their parents’ marital problems. In general however, as described in Table 2, students expressed their primary concerns on how the institution can extend help in developing their ability to open up and discuss problems with AWM of 3.83 and secondly on how they can improve relationships with sibling with AWM of 3.82

Table 3: Over-All Student Needs Assessment: Family Relationship

COLLEGES		Improve Relationship with Siblings	Parentless Home	Ability to Discuss Problems	Separated Parents	Parents' Marital Problems	Relate with Family Members	Over-all Weighted Mean
Engineering	WM	3.86	3.64	3.85	3.40	3.75	3.84	3.72
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	MI	VI	VI	VI
Computer Studies	WM	3.81	3.50	3.87	3.42	3.43	3.67	3.62
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	MI	MI	VI	VI
Allied Health	WM	3.16	2.87	3.23	2.88	3.05	2.99	3.03
	Interpretation	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI
Arts Sciences & Education	WM	3.75	3.66	3.96	3.32	3.71	3.66	3.58
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	MI	VI	VI	VI
Criminology	WM	3.92	3.78	3.94	3.64	3.99	3.92	3.87
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
BM & Accountancy	WM	4.46	4.17	4.23	4.06	4.05	4.14	4.07
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
Int'l Hosp. Mgt	WM	3.71	3.52	3.58	3.44	3.55	3.47	3.47
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	MI	VI	MI	MI
Short Courses	WM	3.90	3.86	4.02	3.73	4.03	3.97	3.92
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
Weighted Average	WM	3.82	3.63	3.83	3.49	3.69	3.71	3.66
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	MI	VI	VI	VI

Students from seven (7) of the eight (8) academic departments expressed their need on “how to start and maintain friendships” of the Social Relationships need-component. The College of Sciences and Education rated it second only to knowing “how to choose friends and how to settle quarrels with friends”. As an institution however, students preferred starting and maintaining relationships as the number one priority wherein they needed help from the Guidance and Counselling Services. This is followed by “knowing to choose friends” as a prelude to productive social relationships while studying in the institution as described in Table 3.

Table 4: Over-All Student Needs Assessment: Social Relationship

COLLEGES		Starting & Maintaining Friendship	Being Attractive to Others	Know to Choose Friends	Settle Quarrels with Friends	Handle Boy/Girl Relationship	Handle Peer Pressure	Over-all Weighted Mean
Engineering	WM	4.02	3.40	3.96	3.61	3.42	3.57	3.66
	Interpretation	VI	MI	VI	MI	MI	VI	VI
Computer Studies	WM	4.01	3.16	3.94	3.38	3.31	3.43	3.52
	Interpretation	VI	MI	VI	MI	MI	MI	VI
Allied Health	WM	3.36	2.70	3.30	2.82	2.78	3.16	3.02
	Interpretation	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI
Arts Sciences & Education	WM	3.88	3.20	3.90	3.51	3.22	3.49	3.55
	Interpretation	VI	MI	VI	VI	MI	MI	VI
Criminology	WM	4.08	3.25	3.90	3.54	3.42	3.63	3.64
	Interpretation	VI	MI	VI	VI	MI	VI	VI
BM & Accountancy	WM	4.30	3.82	4.23	4.23	4.12	4.09	4.12
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
Int'l Hosp. Mgt	WM	3.74	3.21	3.66	3.33	3.13	3.19	3.37
	Interpretation	VI	MI	VI	MI	MI	MI	MI
Short Courses	WM	4.19	3.65	4.19	4.00	3.81	4.04	3.98
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
Weighted Average	WM	3.95	3.30	3.88	3.55	3.39	3.58	3.61
	Interpretation	VI	MI	VI	VI	MI	VI	VI

It is interesting that all academic departments described in Table 5, particularly with baccalaureate degrees are unanimous in giving prime importance and rated ways and means on how to “understand the lessons” of the Studies-need component as a Very Important (VI) endeavour. College of Business Management and Accountancy and Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Education gave equal importance on how to balance between doing assignments and socializations. It is also worth noting that students from the Short Courses Department gave more importance on how to strike equilibrium on doing assignments with still enough time to socialize over understanding one’s lessons. This perception is traceable to a certain level of the emotional maturity of the students, and an in-depth understanding of it leads to quality counselling as found out in the study of Lunnenberg in 2010. In general, students of the University of Perpetual Help considered understanding one’s lessons as Extremely Important (EI) endeavour they have to accomplish. This requires a help from the Guidance and Counselling Services of the university.

Table 5: Over-All Student Needs Assessment: Studies

COLLEGES		Understand my Lesson	Assignments and Socialize	Develop Test-Taking Skills	Effects of Crisis/ Calamities	Deal with Parents' Adjustment	Adjustment in Financial Crisis	Over-all Weighted Mean
Engineering	WM	4.43	4.31	3.62	3.72	3.84	3.83	3.86
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
Computer Studies	WM	4.25	4.20	3.84	3.54	3.63	3.70	3.78
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
Allied Health	WM	3.66	3.55	3.19	3.11	3.20	3.29	3.27
	Interpretation	VI	VI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI
Arts Sciences & Education	WM	4.37	4.19	4.37	3.24	3.57	3.61	3.58
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	MI	VI	VI	VI
Criminology	WM	4.50	4.38	3.66	3.72	3.97	3.96	3.94
	Interpretation	EI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
BM & Accountancy	WM	4.66	4.47	4.66	4.16	4.22	4.20	4.24
	Interpretation	EI	VI	EI	VI	VI	VI	VI
Int'l Hosp. Mgt	WM	4.51	4.35	3.92	3.45	3.49	3.54	3.56
	Interpretation	EI	VI	VI	MI	MI	VI	VI
Short Courses	WM	4.27	4.31	4.05	4.15	4.15	4.08	4.15
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI
Weighted Average	WM	4.33	4.22	4.26	3.64	3.76	3.80	3.80
	Interpretation	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI

CONCLUSIONS

- The respondents have given enough bases for the Guidance Services to come up with a program that would appropriately answer the psycho-social needs of the students for the next three years.
- It is urgent to create new programs that would address students' needs with focus on Self-awareness as a foundation for planning one's life: as a student and as young professional.
- Students are concerned about intricacies of life in the society they live and need to be dynamic in discussing life's situations and problems.
- Current concerns of students are on how to start and maintain wholesome and productive relationships while journeying into adulthood.
- Students of the institution appeared to have healthy values towards study particularly learning soft skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Current flagship programs like the Junior Life Coaches should serve as venue for Self-awareness Activities with emphasis on future life as a productive citizen, a skilful professional and a member of the basic component of a society.
- Dynamic discussions on life issues and concerns should be a priority among Students' Special Groups. Its current number of three (3) should be increased to at least six for the next three years with expert (*or to be further trained*) Faculty Advisers.
- Study groups (Peer Tutorials) should be expanded to all departments and form part of the regular Guidance and Counselling Services Program. Rationalized and dynamic guidelines should be drafted with monitoring

mechanisms and scholarship grants for student-tutors.

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